

NEW YORK TIMES  
2 DECEMBER 1982

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE B-14

# Key to the Battle on Drugs: a Doubling of Troops

By LESLIE MAITLAND

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1 — In the past year President Reagan has made combating narcotics trafficking one of his major causes, escalating the struggle to its highest level in at least a decade.

He has sent scores of agents to south Florida, the most active entry point for drug smugglers, and has called for a dozen anti-narcotics forces to be deployed elsewhere. In addition, the number of Federal agents assigned to narcotics cases is scheduled to be doubled.

The President has pushed for the use of military personnel and equipment to gain intelligence on drug movements. He has encouraged the Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department to provide information and assistance to narcotics investigators.

Attorney General William French Smith has been sent around the world to meet with counterparts in drug-producing countries. Even Nancy Reagan has joined in the fight, visiting drug treatment centers and speaking out against the dangers of narcotics.

But perhaps most important, the President has, for the first time, authorized agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to assist in the battle. One of every 10 agents, or a total of 500, is now working full time on drug investigations.

## 'Most Intense Federal Effort'

"I would say that this is the most intense Federal effort ever against drugs," said Associate Attorney General Rudolph W. Giuliani, one of the key strategists in the effort.

Just this week, Mr. Reagan signed an urgent budget request seeking more than \$130 million to finance the 12 investigative forces, which he has said would tip the battle against drugs. "Our commitment to this program is unshakable," he said in October, calling for the formation of the units.

Devised to provide a unified Federal approach to disrupting narcotics distribution networks, according to Mr. Giuliani, the program calls for hiring another 760 agents for the F.B.I. and the Drug Enforcement Administration, along with 500 more investigators for the Customs Service,

the Internal Revenue Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, all agencies slated to participate in the campaign.

Some critics in Congress familiar with the unsatisfactory results of previous drives to stem narcotics trafficking say that the added manpower will only replenish agent ranks to their 1976 levels, before cuts imposed by both Democratic and Republican administrations. What is needed, they contend, is a firm diplomatic approach to drug-producing countries, requiring their governments to crack down on exporters.

Others argue that short of bracing shores and borderlines with guards to search every person entering the country, no plan to curb drug smuggling can ever be truly successful. They also say that it is impossible to measure with any certainty either the extent of drug use or the impact of any enforcement effort.

However, Justice Department officials counter that the addition of the F.B.I. to the battle has already made a major difference. Since the bureau gained jurisdiction for narcotics at the beginning of this year, its caseload of drug cases has gone from fewer than 100 to more than 850, according to Francis M. Mullen Jr., the F.B.I. official who is acting administrator of the D.E.A. The number of joint investigations has jumped from fewer than 15 to 245, he added, and the number of drug-related wiretaps has almost tripled.

And discussing the C.I.A.'s role in the campaign, Mr. Mullen said that that agency had "really come on board."

"We meet on a regular basis and they're doing some very good work for us," he added. "They're doing very much more now than they did a year ago."

As for the argument that more diplomatic work was needed to stem the flow of drugs into the country, Administration officials say that Attorney General Smith's recent three-week trip was designed with just that in mind.

The necessity of the trip and its value for the expense, which covered a traveling party of about 20 people, have been broadly questioned. But Kenneth W. Starr, counselor to Mr. Smith, insisted the trip was effective and noted that it resulted in a mutual assistance treaty with the Italian authorities. Mr. Starr added that gaining

country, had been a stumbling block in conducting investigations.

In announcing his "major and sweeping" narcotics program in October, Mr. Reagan said, "We intend to do what is necessary to end the drug menace and cripple organized crime."

His pre-election timing led to speculation that his motives were political, but law enforcement officials say they are not concerned with motives, only with getting money for the plan and putting it into action. "The political broom sometimes sweeps best," said one.

According to some Administration officials, the drama of creating 12 new investigative forces made it possible to ask for a large extra appropriation in a way that would not have worked had the Justice Department merely asked for money to hire 760 more investigators and build more prison space, an approach some believe would have been preferable.

## Some Confusion Foreseen

Others worry, however, that it may be cumbersome and confusing to divide the caseload and share information among so many separate law enforcement entities. The 12 new forces will concentrate on large narcotics distribution networks managed by organized crime, while 12 Organized Crime Strike Forces, already in existence, continue work on other types of organized criminal activity. The F.B.I. and the D.E.A., meanwhile, will continue operating from their own regional offices across the country.

Whatever the difficulties, the Administration seems determined to see its plan through Congress, even if some compromises become necessary.

As recently as last week, Administration officials said that the urgent budget request would suggest that the narcotics plan be financed by cutting back in other areas, without raising the budget ceiling. But when that approach raised doubts on Capitol Hill about the commitment to the plan, the Administration shifted its position. The Office of Management and Budget now says it cannot find sufficient money to finance the plan by shaving other programs, and so has quietly abandoned its attempt to dictate where the money should come from.